

THE recent death of Oliver Wendell Holmes removes the last of a singularly gifted group of men who won lasting honors for American letters. Longfellow, Bryant, Hawthorne, Emerson, Lowell, Whittier, Holmes,—the New England Pleiades! The constellation has set to human eyes, but the light of its shining will not soon pass away. Longfellow, the sweet and tender singer, who told in undying song the story of *Evangeline*; Bryant, the cultured and reflective poet, who wrote the immortal "*Thanatopsis*" while a youth of seventeen, and later "*The Water Fowl*"; Hawthorne, the weird and subtle master of romance, who penned the "*Marble Faun*"; Emerson, the transcendental philosopher, "imprisoned on his solitary peak," weighted with the poetic endowment, but unable to unburden his spirit freely in mellifluous numbers; Lowell, the bright, witty, meditative songster, diplomatist and publicist, writer of "*Birds of Freedom* Sawin," and "*Sir Launfal*," and minister at the Court of St. James; Whittier, the gracious ethical poet of faith and freedom, with fire in his soul; and Holmes, the sweetest, purest, most human of American humorists, writer of "*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*," "*The One-Hoss Shay*," and "*The Chambered Nautilus*"! Noble spirits, every one a master of English, except Whittier, and he not infrequently scarcely lagged behind the foremost of them all. With the setting of this brilliant constellation, has passed away the simple, open, easeful English of a former time. So far as literary tastes and style, quality of life and character are concerned, these men were more English than American, and will be so regarded by the critics of the future.

To the above editorial note from the same well-known pen, the editor appends the sonnet published by Chancellor Rand in the *Toronto Globe* of August 29th last:—

TO OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

(*Eighty-fifth birthday, August 29, 1894.*)

Long since thy wit and wisdom broke our fast,
And, like a golden spear thrown by the sun,
Smote the chill pools of life, all hushed and dun,
To warm and gladsome founts of earth's repast.

As day wore on, full oft a trumpet blast
Blew from thy wizard pipes of mirth and fun,
And hurtled at high noon the festive pun,—
The jesses from thy blithesome spirit cast.

The stainless beam is reddening rich and strong,
Ere sounds the pleasant call for breaking bread
At evening's meal, sweet supper of the wise:
The Master's voice, like mother's cradle song,
Breathe soft its loving murmurs overhead,
Filled with the wafture of the starry skies!